

WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD STATE PARK

PARK PROFILE

PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT

William B. Umstead State Park was established in 1943 when it was deeded to the State of North Carolina by the federal government. According to a deed restriction, the park must serve “public park, recreation and conservation purposes” or revert to federal ownership. The park was originally a federal land reclamation demonstration project portraying the potential of using submarginal farm land for recreation and conservation. William B. Umstead State Park has returned to a predominantly natural condition since its establishment. The park enhances local air and water quality, protects an extensive undeveloped area in a rapidly growing region and offers an urban population the opportunity to experience an extensive natural setting close to home. This park is a classic example of successful reclamation of submarginal farmland and symbolizes increasing citizen appreciation for the value of open space and natural landscapes.

Significant biological resources in the park include a Dedicated Nature Preserve, several high quality plant communities, large continuous tracts of forest and diverse plant and wildlife populations typical of the Piedmont Province of North Carolina. The area known as the Crabtree Creek Shrub Slopes is an 85-acre Registered Natural Heritage Area. The Piedmont Beech Natural Area, a 46-acre tract with American beech as the dominant canopy tree, is both a National Natural Landmark and a Society of American Foresters Natural Area. It is within the 500-acre Umstead Park Registered Natural Heritage Area.

The park protects extensive stands of three typical Piedmont forest communities: oak-hickory, moist hardwood; and Piedmont floodplain, as well as smaller areas of several rare community types. Because there has been little disturbance since its establishment, the park is almost completely wooded. What were once fields and pine forests are succeeding to hardwood forests. The park protects this increasingly rare process of Piedmont forest succession. Umstead State Park also has a high degree of natural species diversity, containing over 800 plant species, over 60 species of reptiles and amphibians, over 185 bird species, and over 20 mammal species.

William B. Umstead State Park’s significant recreational resources include a landbase large enough to support an extensive multiple-use trail system, three constructed lakes suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities and areas with potential for the development of visitor-use facilities.

Significant archaeological resources include the numerous rural farmsteads, homesites and graveyards as well as Company Mill and Lynn’s Mill sites. The park also contains group camps, two stone bridges and several picnic shelters built by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Umstead State Park has significant scenic resources that provide views of the largest natural landscape in the Research Triangle Area and vistas of undeveloped lakefront at Big, Sycamore and Reedy Creek Lakes.

Significant geological resources in the park are the rock exposures along creek beds and the Jonesboro fault. The outcroppings are typified by the granite joints exposed along Crabtree Creek. The Jonesboro fault defines the boundary between the Durham Triassic basin and the Carolina slate belt.

The protection of both the unique and the representative natural and cultural resources in the park has the highest priority in park planning and protection commitment. Recreational and environmental-education activities are compatible with the protection of the significant biologic, geologic, archaeological, recreational

and scenic resources in the park. Natural history interpretation and environmental education featuring the park's biologic, geologic and archaeologic resources has the highest priority for visitor program development. The park's hiking, non-motorized biking and horseback riding trail system in a natural forest setting is an outstanding recreational resource that warrants significant support. Trail connections to surrounding greenway systems are encouraged. The development of high-quality picnicking, group camping and non-motorized water-based recreation is also important. The natural beauty of the park's extensive forest is maintained. The wooded trails and streams provide a much-needed aesthetic experience for the growing population of the metropolitan Research Triangle Area.

The Division of Parks and Recreation protects and manages both the unique and the representative biologic, geologic, archaeologic, scenic and recreational resources of William B. Umstead State Park for the use and pleasure of our citizens by:

Promoting an understanding of our natural heritage and an appreciation of our environment through natural-history interpretive programs and environmental-study facilities;

Developing an awareness of the effects of cultural and natural disturbance on our natural resources through protection, interpretation and management of historic sites and selected disturbed areas;

Enhancing the physical, mental and social well-being of citizens of all ages by providing the opportunity for passive, low-impact recreation such as picnicking, hiking, camping, swimming, boating, non-motorized biking and horseback riding;

Fostering land and water stewardship and a conservation ethic; and

Nurturing the spiritual health and emotional equilibrium of all North Carolinians and their visitors, both present and future, through protection and management of scenic streams, lakes, landscapes, roads, trails, natural areas, vistas and panoramas of natural beauty.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Reclamation, Regeneration and Recovery: This theme focuses on the changes that have occurred in the park landscape from the park's establishment as a federal conservation and recreation program to its present day state park status. U.S. Government photographs and reports are available describing the condition of park lands in the 1930s. The role of Civilian Conservation Corps' reclamation efforts warrants special emphasis.

Succession Processes and Second Growth Forests: This theme describes the natural processes by which the park evolved from barren open lands to diverse, mature natural communities.

Land Stewardship: The land stewardship theme focuses on the importance of the park as a large open space in a growing metropolitan area. Aesthetic values and resource management issues such as overuse, noise and water pollution are emphasized.

STATISTICS

Visitation (1998)	571,220
Operating Budget (FY 98-99)	\$ 587,078
Revenue (FY 98-99)	\$ 38,860

VISITOR FACILITIES

Tent & trailer camping (28 sites, showers, no hookups)	Drinking water
Improved group camping (3 sites, includes cabins and mess-hall/kitchen facilities)	Primitive group camping (2 sites)
9 Hiking trails (19.6 miles total)	Rowboat and canoe rental
Picnic area (2 areas, 3 shelters, 130 tables)	Lake swimming (campers only)
Bridle/bicycle trail (11.5 miles)	Lake fishing
Visitor center	Amphitheater
	Exhibit Hall

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION NEEDS

- 1 The **washhouse/toilet buildings, replacement and repairs project** will: \$ 1,818,868
 - Demolish 2 dilapidated washhouses at the Crabtree group camp; one pit privy at Maple Hill; two toilets with asbestos at Reedy Creek; two toilets with asbestos at Crabtree.
 - Construct one small toilet building at Maple Hill; one picnic area toilet at Reedy Creek; one picnic area toilet at Crabtree; two washhouses at Crabtree Group Camp.
 - Renovate four latrines at Lapahio.
 - Extend water and sewer 600 feet to new toilet site at Reedy Creek.
- 2 The **day-use conversion at Sycamore/bridle and bike trail head** project will: 2,252,995
 - Bridle/bicycle trail head—Add 6 picnic sites, drinking water, access road and parking and renovate trailhead latrine.
 - Day-use conversion at Sycamore—Convert Sycamore Mess Hall and West End Lodge into community buildings for group day-use by reservation only. Winterize, heat and air condition one of the community buildings so that it can be used all year. Restore the CCC buildings to account for historical renovation, accessibility and to discover hidden damages. Renovate 6 buildings and remove remaining buildings which will be used for family cabin camping at the relocated campground or for supplies for future repairs. Add new trail loops, toilet building, an electrified amphitheater, pay telephone, exhibits and displays and a residence at Trenton Road. Enlarge the septic field to accommodate expanded use.
- 3 The **Reedy Creek picnic area renovations** project will renovate existing picnic sites; add a small picnic shelter also serving as a park information center; move trailhead to new picnic shelter; provide areas for horseshoes and volleyball as well as an informal, irregularly shaped, multiple-use open area; connect a handicapped access trail to the new shelter; renovate the existing picnic shelter; and provide a public telephone, exhibits and displays. 290,933

4	The tent and trailer campground relocation project will demolish and close the current tent and trailer campground when the new campground opens; develop a tent and trailer camping loop with 27 sites; create additional sites and move 10 cabins from Camp Sycamore to provide primitive cabin sites; construct a campground washhouse with septic field and provide pay telephone; construct a dumpstation; provide underground power to cabins; build trails to Big Lake, the trail system and Sycamore Lake; use the road leading to the Crabtree and Lapihio group camps as the access road; pave the group camp road as far as the tent and trailer campground and the campground loop road; and construct a ranger residence at the old campground utilizing existing infrastructure.	1,592,921
5	The trail renovations project will perform trail maintenance on all hiking trails outside day-use areas to address erosion and compaction problems and improve drainage, including using steps, rerouting or gravel surfacing on steep slopes. For short trails in day-use areas, 4-ft-wide trails will be constructed that consist of a 2 in. gravel base covered with 2 in. of bark mulch. Five bridges will be constructed. SA 1.5-mi. horse and bicycle trail paralleling Ebenezer Church Road will be added to create a loop trail. A 2 in. surface of rock screening will be added to existing horse and bicycle trails.	1,301,577
6	The group camp Crabtree renovations project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crabtree Unit A—Demolished or move existing cabins depending on their condition; renovate the mess hall; winterize the structures to extend the use season; and make the renovated mess hall accessible to provide group camping opportunities. • Crabtree Unit B—Renovate the cabins as a CCC-era group camp; use the lodge as meeting area; install grills so that unit B can be rented separately by smaller groups; relocate better cabins from Sycamore to replace cabins that are in poor condition and to increase number of cabins; renovate staff house, lodge and canteen infirmary; improve the trail to the swimming area; provide fixed kitchen equipment, tables, trays, chairs, utensils, bunk beds and closet cabinets; pave the car parking lot; and regrade and landscape the area. 	911,118
7	The Crabtree picnic area renovations project will renovate existing picnic sites to accommodated intensive visitor use, harden additional foot paths, renovate and electrify two picnic shelters and replace 4 water fountains with winterized units.	342,459
8	The group camp Lapihio renovations project will replace toilet buildings and showers; renovate 34 cabins, 3 latrines, 1 canteen, the dining hall and 1 lodge; convert the latrines to handicapped accessible cabin; add a new washhouse; provide major fixed kitchen equipment, bunk beds, closet cabinets, tables, trays, chairs and utensils; regrade and landscape the area; and pave the car parking lot.	1,633,123
9	The building renovations project will perform repairs to stabilize all park buildings that are not identified in other capital improvement projects.	520,997
10	The Maple Hill Lodge project will renovate the building to continue its use as a primitive camp; repair the lodge chimney to historic site standards; rework the access road; pave the parking area and provide handicap access to lodge; and upgrade water and electric systems.	278,322
11	The boat house renovations project will renovate the boat house; replace the dock and boating equipment; and provide handicapped parking, handicapped accessible hoist at dock, an observation pier, interpretive exhibits and public telephone.	215,985
12	The Camp Whispering Pines renovations project will renovate the Whispering Pines group camp cabins, dining hall and other buildings and replace the toilet buildings and showers.	1,377,492

13	The Reedy Creek maintenance area improvements project will demolish the old office building, renovate the existing shop building, construct a new barracks and upgrade the electrical supply.	841,065
14	The Crabtree Creek maintenance area improvements project will provide a 6-bay vehicle storage building with hydraulic lift and renovate the 3 maintenance buildings, the barracks and the old office building.	1,393,387
15	The new dormitory near Crabtree group camp project will add a group cabin with sleeping areas and rest rooms using CCC-style architecture; provide bunk beds, mattresses, closet cabinets, trays, chairs, utensils and tables to accommodate 40 campers; and construct a 20 car parking lot.	1,292,787
16	The Crabtree Picnic area expansion project will expand the picnic area to an area near the boat house if warranted by increase public demand and provide 2 small shelters (6 tables per shelter), 75 picnic sites, toilet building, parking lot, access road and areas for horseshoes and volleyball as well as an informal, multiple-use open area.	1,144,669
TOTAL:		\$ 17,208,698

DEDICATED NATURE PRESERVE

Umstead Park Dedicated Nature Preserve: In July 1995, 3550 acres of William B. Umstead State Park were approved by the Governor and Council of State for designation as a Dedicated Nature Preserve. This designation supercedes areas previously designated as Registered National Heritage Area and provides more stringent rules for use and protection.

The preserve includes the Piedmont Beech Natural Area (a National Natural Landmark), a rare example of Piedmont/Coastal Plain HeathBluff community with its locally scarce population of Catawba rhododendron (Rhododendron catawbiense), Mesic Hardwood Forest community along the Crabtree Creek drainages and mature examples of Dry-Mesic Oak-Hickory Forest, Piedmont Monadnock Forest and Piedmont/Low Mountain Alluvial Forest communities. Among the more than 800 species of vascular plants found in the preserve are the Federally Endangered Michaux's sumac (Rhus michauxii), the rare dwarf ginseng (Panax trifolius) and the rare shrub nestronia (Nestronia umbellula).

FUTURE LAND ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completing the original master plan for William B. Umstead State Park would have required the acquisition of over 700 acres. Since much of this land is now developed, it has been removed from the land acquisition needs. The remaining 283 acres identified as land needs in the master plan have not been developed. Land acquisition objectives for the park include water quality protection, protection of outstanding natural features such as rhododendron slopes and buffer for facilities.

Master Plan Total Acreage	5,722 acres
Current Park Acreage	<u>5,439 acres</u>
Acquisition Needs	283 acres

1999 STAFF POSITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load
Park Superintendent III	1	Park Attendant	6	Park Attendant 4
Park Ranger III	3	Assistant Park Ranger	1	
Park Ranger II	2	General Utility Worker	1	
Maintenance Mechanic IV	1			
Maintenance Mechanic II	1			
General Utility Worker	2			
Office Assistant III	2			

PROPOSED STAFF ADDITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load
Park Ranger I	3	Boat House Attendant	1	
Clerk/Typist	1			